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SUBJECT: DEWAAL ON "SUDAN'S POLITICAL MARKET" AT A DDDC BRIEFING

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: A December 1 Darfur Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC) briefing focused on the analysis of Sudan scholar Alex DeWaal. DeWaal gave a lengthy, slick presentation asserting that the Sudanese political system is a "market" characterized by a system of patronage, the "buy-out" of actors at the regional and local levels, and essentially constitutes an economic compromise between only the Sudanese political elite. Unhelpfully, DDDC Chairman Abdul Muhammad gave a brief presentation on the work of his organization, publicly criticized Chief Mediator Bassole for relying on the usual UN negotiating blueprints (but did not offer any suggestions of his own), criticized UNAMID for focusing solely on deployment and logistics, and said that he intends to take the work of the DDDC outside of Sudan to the Diaspora. END SUMMARY.

NO EXIT STRATEGY FOR UN IN SUDAN

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¶2. (U) DeWaal opened his presentation at the December 1 "briefing on the work of the DDDC" said that he has studied how peacekeeping missions define success and determine a strategy for their exit. One definition of success is whether the peacekeeping mission builds political institutions that can manage conflict. DeWaal said that if we apply this definition to Sudan in peacekeeping missions are failing and will never be able to leave. Overall, said DeWaal, Sudan is marked by an "irresolvable political landscape with a low political institutional capacity to solve these differences."

SUDAN'S POLITICAL MARKET: MONEY IS THE ONLY CAPITAL

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¶3. (U) As political institutions are weak and there is no consensus on the "political game," Sudanese politics are based on money, patronage, and local influence. "When political capital in a country is so weak, money is the only capital," said DeWaal. DeWaal noted that there are multiple centers of patronage in Sudan, most notably in Khartoum, Juba, and at the regional level. The high price of oil has so far enabled all of the necessary patrons to be satisfied and buy the loyalty of their local constituents. He noted that at the national level all patrons are roughly satisfied with the deal.

DARFUR EASIER TO SOLVE THAN THE NORTH-SOUTH CONFLICT

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¶4. (U) Despite the mutually beneficial oil revenue sharing scheme between the North and the South, DeWaal asserted that the political differences between the North and the South are greater than that between Khartoum and Darfur. He noted that Darfur is now characterized, by relatively low levels of violence and an asymmetry in the use of force between the rebels and the government of Sudan. According to DeWaal, insurgents target government interests to make a point and to sustain their movements. The government, meanwhile, targets the "assets of the elite" in Darfur when the patrons lose control over their areas of control. For example, DeWaal stated that the GoS indiscriminately destroys whole villages to punish

particular patrons. (Note: The GoS bombing of a well near Om Rahik in early November may serve as another example of this phenomenon. End Note). The GoS does this to show that the very existence of the patrons depends on support from Khartoum.

PROBLEMATICO ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN DARFUR

¶15. (U) DeWaal theorized that the international community has driven up the political price of patronage at the local level by directly bringing in humanitarian aid to regional players. It is therefore difficult, asserted DeWaal, for the international community to ever extricate itself from its massive support in Darfur. Even in politics, said DeWaal, the international community has gotten too involved at the micro level. For example, said DeWaal, "it is absurd to think that the Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick was debating who would be the local administrator in Korma or Kulbus." DeWaal said that the presence of the international community in Abuja encouraged a new form of political maneuvering among Darfuris. DeWaal said that the rebel representatives at the negotiations were shrewd, astute, and not altogether honest actors. "It is impossible for someone from outside to outwit someone from Darfur, who knows all of the political games that are being played," said DeWaal.

REBELS CAN BE BOUGHT OFF TOO

¶16. (U) DeWaal said that most of the rebel movements will accept offers to become local patrons in Darfur as long as the price is right. For example, DeWaal said that at the Abuja talks, Abdul Wahid Al-Nur publicly took a principled position (on the need for justice, compensation, security, etc.) but was privately fixated on the actual sum of money necessary he would receive and control. "Abdul Wahid would call his people on the ground in Darfur and very

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crassly say things like 'they offered me 30 million - that isn't enough, but we might take 60 million.' According to DeWaal, DPA negotiator for the NCP, the late Mahjoub Al-Khalifa, miscalculated the amount of money needed to buy off the key rebels. More specifically, DeWaal asserted that the rebels are not interested in overall development in Darfur, but only the sums of money and power which they will personally control. "They don't care about the overall 700 million that will go to the TDRA, but only about the smaller sums of money which they can spend and disperse," said DeWaal. The more sophisticated and ideological Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) may be the one exception to this, said DeWaal, and they may require significant convincing and pressure from the international community to participate in the next round of negotiations.

SPI'S AND DDDC'S ROLE IN THE MARKET

¶17. (U) Continuing with his market analysis, DeWaal said that the Sudan People's Initiative started a new round of bargaining among Sudanese elite over Darfur. The Darfur Darfur Dialogue and Consultation can help stabilize the rules of the game for this political market. DeWaal said that these negotiations among the political elite, come at a time when the levels of violence in Darfur are relatively low and "yet no one seems to want to talk about it," said DeWaal. DeWaal speculated that a formal cease-fire body is very unlikely right now, as rebel movements (and in particular the Justice and Equality Movement,) would not agree to any ceasefire at this point.

DDDC CHIEF SECONDS DEWAAL AND CRITICIZES THE CHIEF MEDIATOR

¶18. (U) DDDC's Abdul Mohammed agreed with DeWaal's analysis and said that the formation of the electoral commission was a prime example of the power play between Sudanese elite. Mohammed said that handling over negotiations would be the basis for future negotiations between these elite players. Mohammed was also very critical of the UN and AU chief mediator Djibril Bassole and the overall slow pace of UNAMID deployment. "The United Nations uses its blueprints of negotiations wherever it goes. The usual formula of wealth sharing, power-sharing, security arrangements -- all of this is an excuse for lazy thinking and we need creative solutions here," said Mohammed. He said that Chief Mediator Bassole has not

clearly articulated a strategy to solve the ongoing crisis in Darfur. Mohammed said that the slow speed of deployment and all the focus on the logistical side of UNAMID has taken on a life of its own.

DDDC REVIEW

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¶19. (U) Although, the majority of the presentation focused on DeWaal's analysis, the final portion of the meeting was devoted to the DDDC. Mohammed said that cooperation with the government of Sudan had improved in the last year, and that compared to previous years there was very little interference in the DDDC's work. Mohammed said that the DDDC will soon begin collaboration with the civil society initiatives started in five clusters - Dar es Salaam, Jeddah, Cambridge, Heidelberg, and Khartoum and take its consultations outside of Sudan. (Note: This strategy merely builds on what the Sudanese themselves have already begun without any input from the DDDC. End note.)

¶10. (U) Other DDDC representatives gave brief presentations of their work. DDDC's Abdul Jibril (a dual Sudanese Canadian citizen) stated that internally displaced persons (IDPS) are most interested in security, administration and governance, and most importantly disarmament across all movements, militias, and Gos security forces. According to DDDC's work, tribal leaders are most interested in democracy, administration and governance, and land issues such as the hawakir system. According to Abduljibril, the meetings with the pastoralists-Arabs have been the most interesting consultations to date. According to him, this group was particularly eager to participate in the consultations to change their negative image as janjaweed and tools of the Gos. This group emphasized that they are most interested in security for their communities and their migration routes.

COMMENT

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¶11. (SBU) DeWaal's analysis deserves attention. If his portrayal of the political market is accurate, Qatar's involvement in upcoming negotiations could be successful, as far as enticing rebel groups to the negotiating table. (Note: For example, the latest rumors are that Qatar has secured the participation of Abdul Wahid through a financial enticement. This has not been verified. End Note.) DeWaal's analysis does ring true when applied to SLM/MM, as Minnawi

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and his inner circle have fixated on smaller sums of money which they would be able to control and use at their discretion. Most importantly, if the regime's oil revenues do begin to dry up, DeWaal's analysis portends future instability in Sudan as the system of patronage based on bribery breaks down.

¶12. (SBU) DeWaal's focus on the relatively "low levels of violence" today may be accurate right now, but deemphasizes the level of ongoing suffering and deep-seated resentment in the region. The effects of past violence live on today with over 3 million people in Darfur's many IDP camps. Abdul Mohammed's role in the meeting also deserves close analysis. Mohammed is an ambitious character, and it is all too clear that he has latched onto DeWaal to give himself and his organization more credibility. His public criticism of the Chief Mediator in front of Khartoum's ambassadors and diplomatic corps was inappropriate, and more evidence of the ongoing power struggle we see between UNAMID and the Chief Mediator. Although the work of the DDDC is valuable in surveying voices from Darfur, it is troubling to think that Mohammed will soon take his show on the road to Europe to work with the Diaspora. Overall, the greater irony of the meeting was that DeWaal's market analysis of Sudanese politics essentially undermines the value of the DDDC's work. Any deal in the region, according to DeWaal, will only continue Sudanese systems of patronage and leave out the voices the DDDC intends to survey.

FERNANDEZ